

All Glory to Sri Guru & Gauranga

Om Vishnupad Paramahansa

# **SRILA THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE**

**A TRIBUTE ON THE OCCASION OF  
THAKUR'S ADVENT ANNIVERSARY**

**Sri Chaitanya Math  
Sree Mayapur, Nadia.**



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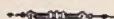
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**Sachhidananda Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur,**  
The Pioneer of Bhakti Cult of 19th Century who  
discovered Sri Mayapur, the Birth Place of  
Bhagawan Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.





All glory to Sri Guru and Gauranga

OM VISHNUPAD PARAMHAMSA

# SRILA THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE

AN HUMBLE HOMAGE

ON THE OCCASION OF THAKUR'S

102nd ADVENT ANNIVERSARY

## I. SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF BENGAL ON THE EVE OF THAKUR'S ADVENT

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna says in the Gita (Ch. IV, 7, 8) "When religion is scoffed at or slandered and irreligion prevails in the name of religion, I descend or send My Own Elect in the mundane plane in every Age, in order to protect the Sadhus from the tyrannical oppression of demons and re-establish the religion of Divine Love bereft of all worldly dross." History repeats itself. The socio-religious condition of Bengal in the latter part of the 15th century finds a replica in the middle of the 19th century. When the society of Bengal became a hot-bed of corruption and disorder, when people at large revelled in gambling, carousing merry-making and in the worship of demigods attended with slaughter of animals and other pastimes of a low order, when irreligion or ungodly principles such as atheism, henotheism, pseudoasceticism, impersonalism, anthropomorphism, apotheosis and pseudo-Vaishnavism and other 'isms' of the empiric school, prevailed as the religious culture of the time, Thakur Bhaktivinode, the

Manifestive Aspect of the Supreme Lord, appeared at Ula (Birnagar) Nadia, Bengal, as the Delegated Divine Potency of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna in order to remove the above stigmas in the socio-religious life of Bengal and to re-establish the 'Sanatana-Prema-Dharma' (eternal religion of Divine Love) as propounded by the Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

## II. THAKUR AS THE WORLD-TEACHER

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna manifests Himself as the Holy Name in the mundane plane for the eternal well-being of the people at large. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Sri Krishna Himself saturated with the Love and Glow of His (Sri Krishna's) Counter-Whole Sri Radha. The primary object of His Descent is (i) to realize the depth of Sri Radha's Love for Himself, (ii) to realize His Own wonderful Sweetness tasted by Sri Radha, and (iii) to experience the Bliss Sri Radha derives in His Divine Company. The secondary object is to disseminate the Holy Name and Divine Love all over the world for the redemption of the people. Thakur Bhaktivinode, being the Delegated Divine Potency, is the most intelligible exponent of the Holy Name, and is pre-eminently the Acharya of Sambandha (relationship), Abhidheya (means), and Prayojana (the highest end)—the three principles, of One Absolute Person Sri Krishna as depicted in the Srimad Bhagavatam. Thakur Bhaktivinode has done the twin services of the Holy Name, viz., preaching and practising in the teeth of all oppositions. He is, therefore, the Nama-Acharya

or the spiritual bestower of the Holy Name and the world-teacher in respect thereto.

### III. THAKUR AS THE PIONEER OF THE MOVEMENT OF PURE DEVOTION OF THE PRESENT AGE

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode, the great pioneer of the present movement of pure devotion has revived the study and principle of unalloyed devotion as taught by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His speeches on the Sri-mad Bhagavatam and his voluminous works on unalloyed devotion (Shuddha-Bhakti) to the Supreme Lord in simple and lucid Bengali, Sanskrit, English and other languages opened the gateway of transcendental realm long sealed as the unknown and unknowable region of mysticism and have made the principles of pure theism easily understandable by the religious-minded public. As for example, his 'Sajjanatoshani', the only spiritual Bengali monthly of his time, his 'Sri Krishna Samhita' an authentic and original Sanskrit treatise on the Real Nature and Divine Deeds of the Lord, his 'Jaiva-dharma' and 'Sri Chaitanya Shikshamrita', the two most famous Bengali works, have created a revolution among the young generation in the domain of religion, by removing scepticism and nescience from the minds of the people enthralled by Maya.\* His lucid expositions of the teachings and

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\* Jaiva-Dharma and Sri Chaitanya Shikshamrita deal with the three principles of Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana in respect of the Absolute Person Sri Krishna coupled with a clear exposition with Illustrations of the fivefold conditions of the soul in this mundane

philosophy of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu have successfully removed the cataract of narrow dogmatism and suicidal egotism from the eyes of the orthodox public and have established the universal religion of Divine Love all over the country. His poems 'Sharanagati', 'Kalyana-Kalpataru', 'Gitavali', 'Gitamala', 'Harinama-Chintamani' and other divine songs are each an abridged encyclopaedia of transcendental truths hitherto unexplored in the field of Vaishnava literature, philosophy and theology.

#### IV. THAKUR AS THE DISCOVERER OF THE BIRTH-SITE OF LORD CHAITANYA

Thakur Bhaktivinode discovered the real Birth-site of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at Sri Mayapur (Old Nabadwip of the 16th. century) on the east bank of the Ganges, which was so long shrouded in mystery. His extraordinary keen insight, his absolute confidence in and complete realization of the Supreme Truth, coupled with the undisputed historical evidence from the Government records and antiquarian maps of Sri Mayapur as well as from the authentic works of the

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plane, viz.:—(i) enshrouded condition, i.e., stones, trees, creepers etc. (ii) condition of shrunken animation, i.e., birds, insects, reptiles etc., (iii) condition of budding animation i.e., (a) uncivilized atheists with no morals, (b) civilized or cultured atheists with some morals, and (c) believers in God fancied in accordance with their mental mould, (iv) condition of bloomed animation, i.e., believers in the Personality of Godhead ; they are known as Sadhana-Bhaktas, (theism begins here), and (v) condition of fully-developed animation, i.e., Bhava or Prema Bhaktas—they are known as Mahabhagavatas who visualize Sri Krishna with Hila in every entity and every entity in Him (Gita, VI, 30).



time of the Lord and, to crown all, the divine inspiration and blessings he received from his spiritual guide, Om Vishnupad Sri Srimad Jagannathadas Babaji Maharaj of revered memory, undoubtedly paved the way for the discovery of this old site as the Birthplace of the Supreme Lord—a fact which is of great importance to the people of India, as being the only place of pilgrimage in Bengal.

## V. THE LORD'S TEACHINGS IN A NUTSHELL BY SRILA THAKUR BHAKTIVINODE

आम्नायः प्राह तत्त्वं हरिमिह परमं सर्वशक्ति रसान्धिं  
तद्भिन्नांशांश्च जीवान् प्रकृतिकवलितान् तद्विमुक्तांश्च भावात् ।  
भेदाभेदप्रकाशं सकलमपि हरेः साधनं शुद्धभक्ति  
साध्यं तत्प्रीतिमेवेत्युपदिशति जनान् गौरचन्द्रः स्वयं सः ॥

Thakur Bhaktivinode, the great pioneer of pure devotion and the founder of the present Gaudia Mission, has summarized in a nutshell the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the above Sloka, the English rendering of which is as follows :—

(1) The self-revealed Vedic truths descending from the Absolute Person Sri Krishna through the preceptorial line of succession are known as 'Amnaya'. They declare that :—

(2) Sri Krishna is the Supreme Principle without a second.

(3) He is always endowed with infinite potency.

(4) He is Nectarine Ocean of all 'Rasas'.



(5) The Jiva-souls are His marginal or borderland discrete parts.

(6) Marginally situated, the Jiva-souls in their fallen state, are liable to be enthralled by Prakriti or Maya, the Deluding External Potency of the Lord.

(7) Lying in between the Chit (Internal Spiritual) and Achit (External Deluding Material) Potencies of the Lord, the Jiva-souls are freed from the thralldom of Maya by submissive listening and unconditional surrender to the Lotus Feet of the Sat-Guru, the Manifestive Aspect of the Supreme Lord.

(8) All spiritual and mundane phenomena are simultaneously distinct and non-distinct manifestations of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. This is known as the 'Achintya-Bhedabheda Siddhanta' of the Lord. It is Achintya or inconceivable, because rationalistic enterprises of human beings are quite incapable of understanding the Transcendental Divinity of the Lord, except by His grace.

(9) Unalloyed devotion to the Absolute Person Sri Krishna; which is the eternal function of all Jiva-souls, is the only means of attaining Divine Love—the *summum bonum* of human existence.

(10) Krishna-Prema or Divine Love alone is the final desideratum of spiritual existence. This is known as 'Dashamula' or the ten basic principles taught by the Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

## VI. THAKUR'S SOLUTION OF THE CONTENDING RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

### (A) THAKUR ON EPISTEMOLOGY— DESCENDING AND ASCENDING PROCESS

Thakur Bhaktivinode has taught us that the process of descending or submitting to the Divine Master in the order of the preceptorial line of succession (Shrauta-Pantha) is the only positive and the surest path of unalloyed and unintercepted knowledge leading to the ultimate goal of Divine Love as distinguished from the ascending or empiric process (Tarka-Pantha) leading us to become either elevationists or salvationists, pseudo-hermits or atheists and that the Holy Name, Form, Attributes, Entourage, Revels and Realms of the Supreme Lord and His Elects do not come under the purview of the empiricists or impersonalists with all the thesaurus of their mundane acquisition and learning. Hence the real knowledge of transcendence can be obtained by the method of submissive listening and unconditional service of the Sat-Guru—which is the first and the foremost step on the path of spiritual life.

### (B) THAKUR ON SAT AND ASAT SAMPRADAYA

Absolute Truth descends through Sat-Sampradaya or Amnaya or the preceptorial line of succession from the Absolute Person Sri Krishna. Those who do not recognize this truth belong to Asat-Sampradaya, i.e., the sectarian religious community not approved by the Vedas and are the open or secret enemies of Truth. They are debarred from the region of transcendence.

In essence there is but one Sat-Sampradaya known as Sri Brahma-Sampradaya while all other existing sects except Vaishnava-Sampradaya are either empiric or opposed to, unalloyed devotion to Sri Krishna. The Gaudiya-Vaishnava community which seeks to follow the teachigns of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is historically descended from Sri Brahma, Narada, Vyasadeva, Mahaprabhu Himself having entered the same by accepting as His Spiritual Preceptor Sri Ishvara Puri, a disciple of Sri Madhavendra Puri of Sri Madhva-Sampradaya. For this reason the Gaudiya Vaishnava community is also sometimes designated as Madhva-Gaudiya-Vaishnava-Sampradaya and the preceptorial line from Sri Krishna to Sri Madhva is common to both communities.

#### (C) THAKUR ON KARMA, JNANA, YOGA AND BHAKTI

Karma, Jnana, Yoga and other empiric means are of no avail divorced from Krishna-Bhakti. The reason is this—Karma is action of the physical and mental senses with fruitive end in view, hence material and transient in the beginning as well as in the end. So, it cannot produce any eternal good to the Jiva-soul. Even if it be Niskama, i.e., selfless and not consecrated to Krishna, it is as worthless as Kamya-Karma or action done with a selfish end inasmuch as the result achieved by it is also material and transient. But when a devotee does an act under the impulse of selfless love for Krishna, it is Bhakti and is, therefore, productive of eternal good not only to the devotee but also to the whole universe. Even knowledge of Abstract Brahman,

however pure, bereft of Krishna-Bhakti does not lead to perfect liberation (Bhag. I, 5, 12)

Knowledge, dissociated from Krishna-Bhakti cannot give salvation, but a devotee of Krishna can attain salvation without empiric or abstract knowledge. Brahma says to Krishna "O Lord! leaving aside all attempts after knowledge of Abstract Brahman, those who listen to the Transcendental Narratives of Thy Glorious Deeds chanted by the Sadhus and who live a life of pure devotion in body, mind and word, can easily, hold sway over Thee, although Thou art almost inaccessible to all in the three worlds. O Krishna, those who, abandoning the path of pure devotion, the source of all well-being, labour for abstract knowledge for its own sake, toil in vain like those who thrash empty husks of corn (Bhag. X, 14, 3, 4)."

The path of Yoga consisting in the practices of Yama (abstinence), Niyama (austerity) etc., is beset with frequent attacks of lust, anger, avarice etc. Nothing is so much enlivening to a soul as the loving service of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna (Bhag. I, 6, 36). Hence 'Sharanagati' or unconditional surrender followed by nine methods of Shuddha-Bhakti (Bhag. VII, 5, 23, 24) to the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna is the only means of deliverance. This is also the message of the last Sloka of the Gita, Ch. XVIII, 66 which supplies the clue to the spiritual life of a true devotee.

#### (D) THAKUR ON YUKTA AND FALGU-VAIRAGYA

Yukta-Vairagya consists in the proper adjustment of all things, sentient and insentient of this universe, to

the service of Sri Krishna in the spirit of non-attachment, while Falgu-Vairagya is the renunciation of all things, sentient and insentient belonging to Sri Krishna under the false impression that they are mundane and hence subject to sense-enjoyment. The pseudo-eremites are quite ignorant of the truth that Sri Krishna is the Lord of the senses and of the whole universe.

#### (E) THAKUR ON REAL KINDNESS AND ALTRUISM

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode says that real kindness consists in the awakenment of the dormant soul by means of Nama-Sankirtana. So, an awakened soul or an Absolute-realized soul can redeem the whole world from Avidya or for forgetfulness of one's own real self and of Godhead, by means of Nama-Sankirtana. This is known as Para-Upakara or the greatest munificence or eternal good that a Jiva can render to another Jiva, while all other acts of kindness or relief to body and mind in the name of altruism as prevalent in the world are temporary and evanescent, because both the donors and the recipients thereof are liable to perish. Kindness in its unconditioned or transcendental state is universal love for all beings, sentient and insentient, in relation to Krishna ; but in its perverted state, it becomes self-centred ; a little expanded it is confined to the physical and mental ameliorations of the members of one's own family ; further expanded it is restricted to the neighbours of the same caste or colour, and a little more expanded it is confined to persons of the same province ; still more expanded it is targeted to the physical and mental amelioration of one's own



country, this is known as patriotism. Next higher step, this kindness concerns itself chiefly with man's welfare only which is otherwise known as altruism or humanitarianism or philanthropy whatever it may be called. But a true Vaishnava's view-point is not confined to these narrow and limited forms of sectarianism. He soars high above the mundane plane and reaches the acme of his life which is (i) 'Jivedaya' (kindness to all Jiva-souls), (ii) 'Nameruchi' (chanting the Holy Name with great avidity), and (iii) 'Vaishnava-Seva' (unconditional service to the Lord's Elects)—three being the same function of an Absolute-realized soul.

#### (F) THAKUR ON DAIVA AND ADAIVA VARNASHRAMA

The people of the four ordained classes (Varnas) and stations in life (Ashramas) emanating from the different limbs of the Virata-Purusha,\* however dutiful and observant of the rules of good conduct in society they may be, are doomed to perdition unless they devote themselves exclusively to the worship of Sri Krishna either in Archana or in Nama-Bhajana (Bhag. XI, 5, 2, 3). Just as watering at the root of a tree nourishes the whole tree with all its limbs and offering food to the Prana (life-energy) nourishes the whole system, so the worship of Achyuta, the Prime Cause of

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\* (A) The four Varnas, viz., (i) Brahmana emanates from the Mouth of the Virata-Purusha, (ii) Kshatriya—from His Arms, (iii) Vaishya—from His Thigh, and (iv) Shudra—from His Feet.

(B) The four Ashramas, viz., (i) Sannyasa emanates from His Head, (ii) Vanaprastha—from His Breast, (iii) Brahmacharya—from His Heart, and (iv) Grihastha—from His Lower Abdomen.

all causes, gratifies all Gods and everything in the universe (Bhag. IV. 31, 14).

(G) THAKUR ON THE DISTINCTION  
BETWEEN A BRAHMANA AND A VAISHNAVA

One who knows Brahman—the Self-Effulgent Aspect of Vishnu is a Brahmana. A Brahmana who does not worship Vishnu ceases to be a Brahmana and is catalogued as a Shudra. There are three kinds of births. The first is the seminal birth from parents. A man is elevated from his seminal birth and becomes a 'Dvija' (twice-born) when he receives initiation from the Acharya who endows him with spiritual investiture, i.e., performs Upanayana with Upavita-Sutra which enables him to utter the Vedic Mantras with which he worships Vishnu and Vaishnavas. A true devotee of the Supreme Lord Vishnu, the All-Pervading Lord of the universe and of all Jiva-souls, is designated as a Vaishnava. A Brahmana's 'Dvijatva' ceases when he refrains from worshipping Vishnu under the guidance of His eternal associates, viz., the Vaishnavas. The third birth happens when the twice-born Jiva-soul realizes his true nature by the unconditional service of Sri Hari-Guru-Vaishnavas.

(H) THAKUR ON IDOLATRY AND IMAGE WORSHIP

Thakur Bhaktivinode considers Sri Murti worship as one of the essential means of spiritual enlightenment. He rejects idolatry. Those who say that God has no Transcendental Form and yet imagine a false form for worship, either material or mental, are certainly idolatrous. But those who behold the Transcendental

Form of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna with their soul's eyes, carry that impression as far as possible to the mind and then give out an emblem for the development of the devotional aptitude of the neophyte are by no means idolaters. While visualizing a Sri Murti one should not see the gross or subtle form of the Vighraha but the Spiritual Absolute Person with one's spiritual eyes opened by one's Guru with the spike of transcendental knowledge. So, idolatry and Sri Murti worship are two different things. He is a worse idolater who believes God to be formless void or empty space. Thakur Bhaktivinode has instructed the worship of Sri Murti in order to prevent a Sadhaka from turning into an idolater, gnostic or an atheist.

(I) THAKUR ON SHUDDHA-BHAKTI  
AND VIDHA-BHAKTI

When a person sits to dine, every morsel of food gives him three things at a time, viz., pleasure, nourishment and appeasement and hunger. So, where a person is a genuine devotee, he must be imbued with three things simultaneously, viz., (a) a steadfast attachment for Krishna, (b) a definite realization of the true nature of Krishna (or Holy Name), Jiva and Maya and their inter-relationship, and (c) a corresponding detachment from all matters or affairs that do not concern Krishna or Krishna-Bhakti (Bhag. XI, 2, 42). Pure devotion, therefore, consists in the confidential loving service by means of all the senses of the body and mind favourable to the gratification of the Spiritual Senses of Sri Krishna under the benign guidance of the Sat-Guru.

Hence, pure devotion to the Absolute Person does not seek for any fruit in return. It is, therefore, free from all desires of self-enjoyment, pseudo-austerity and dry gnosticism which are the marked features of Viddha-Bhakti (anti-devotion) (Bhag. III, 29, 12). So long as the heart is obsessed by the fiendish desires of self-aggrandizement and self-annihilation (impersonalism) how can there develop the felicity of pure devotional aptitude ?

(J) THAKUR ON THE HOLY NAME,  
NAMABHASA AND NAMAPARADHA

Thakur Bhaktivinode has dealt with the subject in his 'Harinama-Chintamani'—an authentic work which will ever remain an authority on the religion of the service of the Absolute Person Sri Krishna in the Form of the Divine Logos or Name. In it Thakur has given us a true conception of the Holy Name. The Name, the Body and the Self of Krishna are all One and the Same ; there is no difference between Them, all the three are of the nature of Eternal Bliss ; whereas in the case of a mortal his name, body and mind are quite different from one another. Krishna's Name is the Wish-Yielding Gem—is Krishna Himself—is Chaitanya or Absolute Consciousness—the Embodiment of Divine Rasa. His Name is the Entire Whole—the Holiest of the Holy—the Eternal—the Unconditioned and is One and the Same with Krishna Himself. His Name, Form, Qualities, Entourage, Revels and Realms are all Eternal and Blissful and are, therefore, not intelligible to mundane human understanding. They manifest

themselves automatically to the spiritual senses of the Jiva-soul when he turns to Krishna and renders eternal loving service with his body, mind and word under the guidance of the Sat-Guru (Padma Purana). Nama-bhasa is the dim reflection or dawning of the Holy Name. It is devoid of ten offences against Vishnu and Vaishnavas. The ten offences committed against Vishnu and Vaishnavas are known as Namaparadhas. A true devotee must always be cognizant of Nama-bhasa and Namaparadha the former leads one to liberation from the bondage of Maya, while the latter leads one to eternal damnation. Of all other forms of worship Thakur Bhaktivinode has laid absolute stress on Nama-Bhajana ; because, the chanting of the Holy Name in the association of Sadhus is the only panacea of all world-evils. "In the association of Sadhus enlightening discourses about the Name, Form, Attributes and Deeds of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna are held and these discourses serve as relish to the hearts and ears of the listeners. Sincere and submissive listening to these soul-awakening discourses give birth to Sadhana-Bhakti, Bhava-Bhakti and Prema-Bhakti in gradual succession (Bhag. III, 25, 25)." Hence abjuration of bad company is the only rule of pure devotional life of a Vaishnava ; because, the company of the wicked saps all the best virtues of human life, viz., truth, purity, compassion, reticence, i.e., non-indulgence in idle gossip, intelligence, modesty, beauty, fame, forbearance, dispassion, self-control and glory. The company of those unsteady and ignorant people who misidentify



themselves with their body and mind, who are, therefore, anti-devotional in nature and are like pet animals at the beck and call of women are said to be bad company. No other company is so delusive and ensnaring as the company of women and of those who look upon them with lustful eyes (Bhag. III, 31, 33-35).

(K) THAKUR ON THE CAREER AND ACTIVITIES OF  
A VAISHNAVA AND THOSE OF A NON-DEVOTEE

A Vaishnava is an Absolute-realized soul. So, his career and activities transcend the limited sphere of time and space. "The Lordly characteristics of Vishnu and Vaishnavas are that, though they manifest Themselves within the ambit of Prakriti or Maya, They are not at all enthralled by her triple qualities (Bhag. I, 11, 38)." But such is not the case with a conditioned soul whose life and activities are always guided by the triple qualities of the octopus Maya. Therefore,

"He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavas die  
When thou art living still in Sound !  
The Vaishnavas die to live and living try  
To spread the Holy Name around !"

(L) THAKUR ON THE SAT-GURU AND A PSEUDO-GURU

"He who can keep under control the sixfold passions of (i) idle gossips, (ii) mental speculation, (ii) wrath, (iv) palatable dishes, (v) gluttony, and (vi) carnal appetite is a Gosvami (controller of senses) quite competent to dominate the whole world" (Sri Rupa Gosvami). "He who is well-versed in the inner principles of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna is a Sat-Guru or a Gosvami, be he a Brahmana, a Sannyasi or even Shudra by birth"

( Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu ). No one can be the Sat-Guru without the following fundamental qualities, viz., ( a ) an adept in the scriptural lore, ( b ) an adept in the Transcendental Love-Sports of Sri Radha-Krishna, and ( c ) a controller of the sixfold passions mentioned above. A Uttama Sadhu or Mahat, a Sat-Guru, a genuine ascetic (Yukta-Vairagi) and a Mahabhagavata are identical terms. A Sadhu cannot be a Sat-Guru without being a true Vaishnava possessing the above transcendental qualities. A pseudo-Guru is void of all these qualities. A blind cannot lead another blind.

( M ) THAKUR ON THE FIVEFOLD RESORTS OF KALI  
AND THE FIVEFOLD STIMULI OF  
DEVOTION TO SRI KRISHNA

People in this Black Age of warring discord, self-sufficiency, jealousy and hypocrisy are liable to fall a victim to the fivefold snares of Kali, viz., (i) gambling, (ii) indulging in all sorts of intoxicant, (iii) consorting with women, (iv) slaughtering or living on meats of animals, and (v) wasting money in frivolous pursuits other than utilizing it in the service of the Supreme Lord Who is the Sole Proprietor of all that exists on earth. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as the Acharya or the World Teacher saves and redeems the people of the world from the terrible grip of Kali by means of Nama-Sankirtana, the Yuga-Dharma or the universal church. So, He is called the Redcemer of the Kali-Yuga. Of all the 64 modes of cultivating Bhakti the five chief of them are :—(i) association of Holy Men, (ii) congregational chant of the Holy Name of Sri Krishna, (iii) sub-

missive listening to the reading of the Bhagavatam, (iv) dwelling in Mathura (the Blissful Realm of Transcendental Knowledge), and (v) reverential worship of the Holy Image of Sri Radha-Krishna. Even a little of these five generates pure love for Sri Krishna. Some may practise one or more but it is steadfast attachment for Sri Krishna that begets Krishna-Prema.

Thakur Bhaktivinode has taught us for the first time in the history of the world how to handle the revelations in a perfectly rational and scientific way and has also shown the way for fully utilizing the modern scientific knowledge in its widest sense for the service of the Revealed Truth. The comparative study of religion can have no real scientific basis until the method announced and employed by Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in his books is unreservedly adopted for such study. Those who really wish to enter into the true spirit of the teaching of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu cannot do so without following the footsteps of Thakur Bhaktivinode who has successfully applied his method to the whole field of religious enquiry.

### THAKUR ON THE SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Thakur Bhaktivinode has also extolled the super-excellence and undisputed authority of the Srimad Bhagavatam as the best commentary on the Aphorisms of the Vedanta, since, the author of the Aphorisms and Srimad Bhagavatam is one and the same person. It is the only Divine Book that prescribes the three cardinal points of religion, viz., (i) Sambandha (the relation

between the Absolute and the Jiva-world and the universe), (ii) Abhidheya (the supreme duty of man to the Absolute Person), and (iii) Prayojana (the ultimate prospect of human life). The worshipper of the Absolute Person is also called Bhagavata. Hence a Bhagavata is the real exponent of the Srimad Bhagavatam and in this respect Thakur Bhaktivinode, being a Mahabhagavata, is the real exponent of Srimad Bhagavatam. The superiority of the Srimad Bhagavatam consists in the uniting of all sorts of theistic worship into one excellent principle in human nature which goes by the name of Bhakti or the eternal function of every Jiva-soul, the highest stage of which is known as Prema-Bhakti or Divine Love.

### THAKUR'S SAINTLY CHARACTER

His was a saintly character. His profound knowledge of transcendental philosophy endeared him to all men of light and learning throughout the length and breadth of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. He had practically no enemy in the world as he did not cherish any kind of animosity against others. Rather those who tried to be his enemy out of jealousy or malice or with a view to thwarting him from his righteous path of propagating the Divine Doctrine of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, were, in the long run, ashamed of their nefarious conduct and, in most cases, craved his pardon which was never refused. He did not chastise any one unless and until he was perfectly confident that he had a right over him to do so for his eternal welfare. On the other hand, he who received such chastisement from

him always thought himself exceedingly gratified. He had not the least shadow of vanity of his high lineage, immense wealth, vast erudition and handsome personality. Humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearant than a tree, ever offering due honours to others without coveting any for himself, the Holy Name of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna always danced on the tip of his tongue and made him sing the glories of the Holy Name all through his life. 'Back to our eternal home and back to Sri Krishna' was the *Ip se dixit* he preached and practised throughout his life.

### THAKUR'S SUCCESSORS

Thakur Bhaktivinode entrusted his life's Mission to his successor Om Vishnupad Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaj who sent preachers to the West to cultivate a friendly feeling of good will and reciprocal spiritual understanding between the people of the East and the West. It is Divine Love alone that can establish unmixed peace in the present warring world, while all other attempts are mechanical and hence productive of no eternal good. Thakur Bhaktivinode also predicted that the time is not very far when the East and the West will meet on the transcendental plane of unalloyed Divine Service to the Absolute Person. This predicted union is at present in progress in the shape of the expanding activities of the parent Sri Chaitanya Math and its branches Sri Gaudiya Maths, founded by Prabhupad Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakur in various places, under the able guidance of his most



trusted disciple, the present Acharya Tridandi Gosvami Srila Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Maharaj.

### THAKUR AS AN IDEAL RUPANUGA ACHARYA

As an eminent follower of Srila Rupa Gosvami who fulfilled the desire of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Thakur Srila Bhakti Vinode performed these four works very creditably :

(i) Thakur discovered the hidden Tirthas, specially Sridham Mayapur, the birth-place of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

(ii) Thakur established the service of Sri Bigrahas —(a) Sri Sri Gaur-Gadadhar at Sri Swananda Sukhada Kunja, his place of worship at Sri Godruma (Swarupganj) in the circle of great Nabadwip in the district of Nadia, (b) Sri Sri Gour-Vishnupriya and (c) Sri Sri Radha-Madhab at Sri Yogapith, the birth-site of the Supreme Lord Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu in Sridham Mayapur, in the old city of Nabadwip and (d) Sri Sri Radha-Giridhari at Bhakti Bhaban in Calcutta.

(iii) Thakur wrote about 100 books on unalloyed devotion in various languages.

(iv) Thakur preached Bhakti-Sadachar, i.e. the doctrine of Prema-Bhakti and favourable practice thereof in various places.

Thakur Srila Bhakti Vinode is truly named 'Sachchidananda Das' i.e. the servitor of Sri Chaitanya

Mahaprabhu and Sri Sri Radha Madhab who are embodiment of ever existence, intelligence and divine bliss.

In fine, we, the devotees of Sri Chaitanya Math, offer our humble obeisances once and again to the lotus-feet of Srila Thakur Bhakti Vinode and his true followers.

“नमो भक्तिविनोदाय सच्चिदानन्दनामिने ।

गौरशक्तिस्वरूपाय रूपानुगवराय ते ॥”





